

Application No. 10/074,466
Amendment date November 5, 2003
Response to Final Office Action date September 15, 2002

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in the Application. Claims 1-10, 12-14 and 17-25 were rejected. Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to correct informalities.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 15-16 are allowed; and claims 11 and 26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Objections:

Claims 1 and 17 were objected to for informalities.

Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to correct the word "respectfully" to the word "respectively", as suggested by the Examiner.

Thus, withdrawal of the objections of claim is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-4, 6-9 and 12-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,664,862 to Redmond et al. (hereinafter "Redmond") for the reasons stated on pages 2-4 of the Office Action. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with the following reasons.

Since a light generating means, in claim 1, is adjacent to at least one of the first and second side portions of a second light guiding means, an amount of light inputted to the first and second side portions may be varied depending on an amount of light emitted from the light generating means (See Fig. 2 or 7 of Applicants' application). Thus, the widths of the first and second side portions for receiving the lights emitted from the light generating means are defined according to an amount of lights inputted to the first and second side portions, respectively.

On the contrary, the lamps (47 in Fig. 2) of an edge light (14), in Redmond, are coupled to the end portions (44, 45) to be disposed at the inside of the edge light (14) and inject lights into an optical guide (32). Since the lamps (47) are fixed at the inside of the edge light (14) with the end portions (44, 45) and the lights emitted from the lamps (47) are injected into the optical guide (32) connected to the end portions (44, 45), the widths of the end portions (44, 45) are not related to an amount of lights generated from the lamps (47). Therefore, the end portions (44, 45), as indicated by the Examiner, have the

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same width regardless of an amount of lights generated from the lamps (47). Accordingly, Redmond does not disclose or teach the limitations: a second light guiding means including opposite first and second side portions, at least one of which is adjacent to the light generating means; and widths of the first and second side portions are defined according to an amount of the light input to the first and second side portions, respectively, as claimed in claim 1.

Further, Redmond neither discloses nor teaches the limitation: the distance between the light projecting portion and the light reflecting portion becoming narrow as an amount of a light flux emitted from the light generating means decreases, as claimed in claim 1. An amount of lights received on the second light guiding means is maintained to be the same at any surface points of the second light guiding means, by controlling the distance between the light projecting portion and the light reflection portion based on an amount of lights emitted from the light generating means.

On the contrary, the facets (39), in Redmond, do not make the amount of light received to the edge light (14) to be the same at any surface points of the edge light (14), but provide multiple reflections of light within an elongate portion (33). It is not found, in Redmond, that the distance between the planar front and shaped back surfaces (34 and 35) is controlled based on the amount of lights emitted from the lamps (47) to maintain the amount of lights to be the same at any surface point of the edge light (14). Thus, Redmond does not disclose or teach all the limitations of claim 1.

Accordingly, Redmond does not anticipate or render obvious claim 1. Claims 2-4, 6-9 and 12-13 are believed to be allowable due to their dependencies on claim 1. withdrawal of the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 17-20 and 22-24

Claims 17-20 and 22-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmonde in view of U.S. Patent 3,838,909 to Fitzgibbons (hereinafter "Fitzgibbons") for the reasons stated on pages 5-7 of the Office Action.

Fitzgibbons discloses an ambient illuminations system. Fitzgibbons neither teaches nor suggests the limitations: a second light guiding means including opposite first and

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second side portions, at least one of which is adjacent to the light generating means; the distance between the light projecting portion and the light reflecting portion becoming narrow as an amount of light flux emitted from the light generating means decreases; wherein widths of the first and second side portions are defined according to an amount of the light input to the first and second side portions, respectively, as claimed in claim 17.

Thus, Fitzgibbons does not cure the deficiencies of Redmond. Accordingly, claim 17 is patentable over the combination of Redmond and Fitzgibbons. Claims 18-20 and 22-24 are believed to be allowable due to their dependencies on claim 17.

Claim 5

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmond in view of U.S. Patent 3,761,704 to Takeichi et al. (hereinafter "Takeichi") for the reasons stated on page 7 of the Office Action.

Takeichi is directed to a dial illuminating device comprising a light converting member. Takeichi teaches neither controlling the distance between the light projecting portion and the reflecting portion based on an amount of lights nor controlling the widths of the portions for receiving the lights based on the amount of the lights. Thus, Takeichi does not teach the limitations: the distance between the light projecting portion and the light reflecting portion becoming narrow as an amount of light flux emitted from the light generating means decreases; wherein widths of the first and second side portions are defined according to an amount of the light input to the first and second side portions, respectively, as claimed in claim 1.

Accordingly, the combination of Redmond and Takeichi does not render obvious claim 1. Claim 5 is believed to be allowable due to its dependencies on claim 1.

Claim 10

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmond in view of U.S. Patent 5,442,522 to Kalmanash (hereinafter "Kalmanash") for the reasons stated on page 8 of the Office Action.

Kalmanash discloses a backlight system using different types of lamps for day viewing and night viewing, which is distinct from the illumination device of claim 1. Thus, Kalmanash does not teach the limitations: the distance between the light projecting

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portion and the light reflecting portion becoming narrow as an amount of light flux emitted from the light generating means decreases; wherein widths of the first and second side portions are defined according to an amount of the light input to the first and second side portions, respectively, as claimed in claim 1.

Accordingly, the combination of Redmond and Kalmanash does not render obvious claim 1. Claim 10 is believed to be allowable due to its dependency on claim 1.

Claim 14

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmond in view of U.S. Patent 5,055,978 to Rogoff (hereinafter "Rogoff") for the reasons stated on page 8 of the Office Action.

Rogoff discloses a light source for directing light from a lamp to a substantially flat light emitting surface, which is distinct from the illumination device of claim 1. Rogoff neither teaches nor suggests the limitations: the distance between the light projecting portion and the light reflecting portion becoming narrow as an amount of light flux emitted from the light generating means decreases; wherein widths of the first and second side portions are defined according to an amount of the light input to the first and second side portions, respectively, as claimed in claim 1.

Thus, the combination of Redmond and Rogoff does not render obvious claim 1. Claim 14 is believed to be allowable due to its dependency on claim 1.

Claim 21

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmond in view of Fitzgibbons, and further in view of Takeichi for the reasons stated on page 9 of the Office Action.

As described above, any of Redmond, Fitzgibbons and Takeichi does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 17. Thus, the combination of Redmond, Fitzgibbons and Takeichi does not render obvious claim 17. Claim 21 is believed to be allowable due to its dependency on claim 17.

Claim 22

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Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmond in view of Fitzgibbons, and further in view of Rogoff for the reasons stated on page 9 of the Office Action.

As described above, any of Redmond, Fitzgibbons and Rogoff does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 17. Thus, the combination of Redmond, Fitzgibbons and Rogoff does not render obvious claim 17. Claim 25 is believed to be allowable due to its dependency on claim 17.

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Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice of Allowance issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is cordially requested to telephone the undersigned.

In the event the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks deems additional fees to be due in connection with this application, Applicants' attorney hereby authorizes that such fee be charged to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

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